McGILL UNIVERSITY **SENATE**

Memorandum

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TO:	Senate, March 28, 2007
FROM:	Morton J. Mendelson, Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning)
SUBJECT:	Preliminary Administrative Response to the Recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning.
DATE:	March 19, 2007
DOCUMENT #:	D06-48
FOR:	☐ DECISION ☐ APPROVAL ☒ DISCUSSION

ISSUE:	The Preliminary Administrative Response to the Recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning.
BACKGROUND:	The *Final Report of the Principal's Task Force* [www.mcgill.ca/principal/focus/final/] was completed in December 2006 and summoned the University to action with important, far-reaching recommendations. The *Report* called upon the University Administration to respond to the recommendations in two stages: preliminarily in the winter term of 2007 and in more detail early in the fall term of 2007. Rather than presenting specific initiatives, this preliminary response is meant to shape the process by which the University community - students, faculty, and staff - will be engaged in advancing the recommendations of the *Report*.
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL:	
RATIONALE:	
PRIOR CONSULTATION:	Senior Administration, Deans, and student groups.
NEXT STEPS:	Circulate to Senate and Board of Governors.
APPENDICES:	Preliminary Administrative Response to the Recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning.

Preliminary Administrative Response to the Recommendations of the

Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill

Professor Anthony C. Masi, Provost

McGill University

March 2007

In the spring of 2005, the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill was struck by Principal Heather Munroe-Blum, with a mandate to investigate whether the University was as engaged in its mission with respect to students as it was with respect to research and to examine the strong synergies between the two. The Task Force was given a broad mandate to review issues affecting student life and learning at McGill with the aim of making a few substantial recommendations that would be given priority for implementation and that would have an impact across the University. The *Final Report of the Principal's Task Force* [www.mcgill.ca/principal/focus/final/] was completed in December 2006 and summoned the University to action with important, far-reaching recommendations (summarised in Appendix A):

> *The goal is clear: to provide students with the support and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential while at McGill and to ensure that all members of the community share in this goal. McGill is only as great as what it can offer to students, to society and to the advancement of knowledge; and in that respect, the life and learning that each of our students experiences while at the University is a measure of its success.* [1]

Method for Preparing this Preliminary Response

The *Report* called upon the University Administration to respond to the recommendations in two stages: preliminarily in the winter term of 2007 and in more detail early in the fall term of 2007. Rather than presenting specific initiatives, this preliminary response is meant to shape the process by which the University community - students, faculty, and staff - will be engaged in advancing the recommendations of the *Report*.

> *The final administrative response will address, among other things, processes and timelines for implementation of the recommendations of the Principal's Task Force, the costs of implementation, and mechanisms for evaluating the University's progress in implementing these recommendations. In preparing this response, there will be consultation, as necessary and appropriate, with students, Deans, and members of the University staff. The recommendations of each of the individual working groups that made up the Task Force will be conveyed to the relevant University administrators, so that they may be considered in developing administrative responses to the recommendations contained in this report.*

Thus, just as the *Report* was necessarily the result of broad consultation, the responses to it will be based on University-wide self-reflection, planning, and discussions that lead to concrete

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, sections in italics are direct quotes from the *Final Report of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill*.

plans. Moreover, the final response will propose a "report card" by which we will monitor and evaluate our success in reaching the goals set out in the *Report*.

The Principal charged the Provost's Office with the task of drafting the administrative responses. As a first step, a table of recommendations from the *Final Report* – not only those endorsed by the Task Force as a whole, but also those offered by its working groups was prepared. For each recommendation, one or more individuals were identified from whom input was solicited (see Appendix B for the list of individuals). The individuals were sent the table and were asked to provide, where relevant, the following information:

- existing initiatives that already address the recommendation

- plans underway to address the recommendation with a realistic timeline and estimated costs

- new initiatives that could address the recommendation with a realistic timeline and estimated costs

- resource constraints

- requirements for additional information or data

- benchmark indicators to measure progress toward the recommendation

Given that the focus was on a *preliminary* response, individuals were asked to respond briefly, with key points. Although consultation was encouraged as appropriate, individuals were reminded that there would be ample time for coordinated, broader, fuller consultation in preparation of the final administrative response. Student input was sought at this point by requesting feedback from the four University-level student associations (SSMU, PGSS, MCSS, and MACES).

In addition to the process outlined above, Deans were asked questions relevant to the recommendations of the Principal's Task Force in their discussions with the Provost's Office related to Faculty compacts. The relevant information provided by them was used in the preparation of this administrative response.

The two approaches – i.e., direct feedback regarding the recommendations and compact discussions – were meant to serve a number of goals:

- ensure broad consultation regarding the preliminary response

- generate examples of successful initiatives that address particular recommendations, which might then be adopted more widely

- sensitise University stakeholders to the recommendations

- promote self-reflection and planning regarding the recommendations

- ultimately promote a sense of ownership by the community.

Senior Administrative Position Related to Student Life and Learning

A re-organisation of the Office of the Provost was underway and one of its most significant changes was in line with a recommendation made in the *Progress Report of the Principal's Task Force*: a Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) was appointed in July 2006. The Deputy Provost now serves as the senior administrator responsible for the implementation of policies, actions and decisions aimed at enhancing student life and learning at McGill. The Deputy Provost has assumed a leadership role to ensure that students are engaged in the academic community at McGill, a community that is welcoming to all of our students, current and future, and in which they play a pivotal role. The Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) serves as a central liaison among the University's senior administration, Faculties, student organisations and Senate, with a view to ensuring that impact on student life and learning is factored into all of our decision-making processes.

The Deputy Provost's mandate includes the following broad areas that touch on student life and learning: Admissions, Recruitment, and Registrar's Office; Athletics; Office of the Dean of Students; Residences; Student Services; Teaching and Learning Services; and University-level oversight of academic quality control. One of the goals of the position is to facilitate coordination among these areas and between them and other sectors of the University.

The *Final Report of the Principal's Task Force* offered specific suggestions for the Deputy Provost's mandate, two of which warrant mention here:

- *Articulating McGill's values, standards and goals with respect to student life and learning and overseeing their integration, as appropriate, into University policies, operations and procedures.*

- *Considering the most effective configuration of positions and responsibilities for the Dean of Students, and the direction of Student Services.*

The Deputy Provost has already spoken to a variety of groups, including Senate, Management Forum, Faculty Councils, and the Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS), in an effort to introduce the recommendations of the *Report* and to foster discussions about the definition of a publicly-funded, research-intensive, student-centred University. The role of advocate for student-centredness to academic and administrative units will continue to be a cornerstone of the Deputy Provost's role at McGill.

A search is underway for a new Dean of Students. With the appointment of the Deputy Provost, the position profile of the Dean of Students was redefined (see Appendix C). Reporting to the Deputy Provost, the Dean of Students will have primary responsibility for championing student rights, fostering academic integrity, and providing impartial oversight of the *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures*. The Dean will also play an important role in promoting University-wide initiatives to strengthen undergraduate academic advising.

However, the Dean of Students will no longer have responsibility for managing Student Services. Rather, a search is underway to fill a new position, Executive Director of Services for Students (see Appendix D). Also reporting to the Deputy Provost, the Executive Director will foster and enhance the student experience through the management and development of student

services and will work closely with the Dean of Students regarding the reorganisation of current student services, ongoing issues of student well-being, crisis planning and response, and the relationship between services for students and academic issues.

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Three Broad Recommendations

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Members of the Principal's Task Force proposed recommendations in the areas of academic advising and mentoring, resources for students, and the building of a learning community. In this section, the recommendations in each area are broadly summarised, followed by some steps that have been, or are about to be, taken to address them, as well as what further information is needed to fully define the extent of the problem and what will be done to prepare the final administrative response by the beginning of the fall 2007 semester. In addition, Appendix A includes illustrative examples, drawn from the consultation described above, about current or planned initiatives.

Academic Advising and Mentoring at McGill

The Principal's Task Force made the following central recommendations on advising:

- *McGill should ensure that quality academic advising is available and accessible for all students, geared to the stage of the student's academic career.*

- *Members of the academic staff should be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to assume mentoring roles vis-à-vis students, usually on the basis of shared academic interests.*

- *The University is accountable for minimising unnecessary obstacles to students in academic and administrative matters, for making relevant information available in a timely fashion, and for providing the guidance students need through the academic cycle.*

Advising. The Advising Subcommittee of the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) has been revitalised to provide a forum for discussions about best practices in advising undergraduate and professional students at McGill and to determine what policy changes, if any, are needed. In addition, an initiative to establish an Academic Advisors' Network, which, among other things, would enable Advisors themselves to share experiences and make recommendations, will be closely monitored and, as appropriate, broadened. Discussions have already been undertaken with Human Resources to establish in-house professional development workshops for advisors that will complement existing workshops for faculty on graduate supervision that are provided by Teaching and Learning Services. Finally, careful consideration is being given to promising information-technology (IT) solutions to some advising problems – e.g., a major improvement in our Academic Calendars, with a move to enhanced web-based versions.

At the present time, however, we do not fully understand the extent of the gap between advising at McGill and optimal, or even adequate, advising. Before the final administrative response is completed, work will be undertaken to identify benchmark indicators (e.g., number of advisors; funds spent on advising; extent of e-advising; etc.), how McGill currently stands

with respect to them, where McGill should stand by virtue of best practices and comparisons with peer institutions in North America, the cost of closing any gaps that are identified, and realistic time lines for reaching goals that we adopt for ourselves.

Mentoring. The idea of mentoring undergraduate and professional students will require elaboration to fully outline what are possible expressions of the activity, be they formal group meetings (e.g., seminars), informal group meetings (e.g., First-Year Interest Groups), formal one-on-one exchanges (e.g., research supervision for undergraduate and professional students), or informal exchanges. Some headway can be made through the efforts of disciplinary Faculties and teaching units, but much of the progress in this area will likely rely on the engagement of academic staff and on the valuing of mentoring activities as part of professors' teaching duties. Discussions will be undertaken before the final administrative response is completed to explore ways in which we will be able to create an ethos of mentoring at McGill.

Bureaucracy. Students' complaints about bureaucracy may result from different causes:

- unnecessary regulations and unnecessarily complicated procedures;
- inconsistent regulations and procedures across different units in the University;
- unclear information about regulations and procedures;
- lack of clarity about when and how exceptional circumstances can be accommodated;
- lack of a single point of contact (either real or virtual) to address specific issues;
- difficulty in finding an individual willing to take ownership of particular problems or issues raised by students.

These and other causes have to be identified and addressed by all administrative and academic units that serve students. Some current efforts are worth noting. The Committee on Student Affairs has created a Subcommittee on the Coordination of Student Affairs Policies in an attempt to standardise policies and procedures across Faculties, thereby reducing red tape. In addition to the on-going and highly successful "Spotlight on Service" series, Human Resources is working with the Office of the Deputy Provost to build staff development modules for McGill employees who serve students on front lines and for their managers, in an attempt to ensure that they have the requisite skills for providing the best possible service to students. IT solutions to address specific problem areas (e.g., application for international exchanges) are being developed. Careful analysis will be required before the final administrative response is written to map out what problems can be addressed immediately by individual units, what problems will require coordinated efforts across units and how to support those efforts, where additional resources would be required (either one-time-only or ongoing), and a list of priority areas with appropriate time lines.

Resources for Students: Funding and Space

The Principal's Task Force made the following central recommendations in this area:

- *McGill University should develop a base level of funding for graduate research students in all departments that is competitive with that offered by our peers, both Canadian and international.*

- *The University should provide adequate and safe laboratory and office work space on campus for all graduate students.*

- *The University should take measures to secure the resources necessary to offer sufficient assistance to undergraduate and professional students over the course of their program so that no candidate offered admission to McGill need turn down that offer for lack of financial assistance.*

- *Informal meeting space available for students' use should be distributed across the campus, including some quiet space, and space within easy access of snacks and beverages.*

Graduate-student funding. The strategic planning White Paper, *Strengths and Aspirations* (*http://www.mcgill.ca/files/provost/Strengths_and_Aspirations_June_2006.pdf*) , makes a clear commitment:

> *Action III.1.2: McGill will allocate resources and develop new funding sources in order to increase graduate student funding to levels equal to or greater than those of our major peer competitors.* (p. 22)

In line with this commitment, an increase to funding of graduate students in research programs is being proposed for the University budget for 2007-08. In the first instance this funding will be directed toward international Ph.D. students in the form of McGill International Doctoral Awards (see Appendix E). Recent analyses of the gap between current levels of graduate-student funding and our goal will have to be revised, especially in line with projected increases in graduate enrolment and announced increases in support for graduate education by our peer institutions.

Graduate-student funding is a major priority in fund-raising activities being undertaken by the Vice-Principal (Development, Alumni, and University Relations) and the Deans of the Faculties. Moreover, the Office of the Vice-Principal (Inter-Institutional Relations) will take a leadership role in advocating for a Government program of matching donations to Quebec universities, in order to encourage growth in philanthropy and a reduction of fees for international graduate students to the levels paid by Quebec graduate students.

Graduate-student space. The White Paper, *Strengths and Aspirations,* makes another clear commitment:

> *Action III.2.3: McGill will improve space for graduate students.*
>
> *To increase the quality of the graduate experience and to provide our students with a better academic environment, McGill will also improve the quality of office space made available to graduate students, ensure the quality of the equipment and surroundings in their laboratories, and establish spaces for students from different fields to meet informally.*

Although we know quite well that the quality and quantity of graduate student office space is insufficient, the extent and distribution of the problem are not well defined. More data are needed, not only to asses the current situation, but also to determine the type of space that best serves students' needs. Planning and Institutional Analysis will work in conjunction with PGSS, and the newly appointed Associate Provost (Graduate Education) to obtain more data in this area. A plan and timeline for completing this fact finding will be available for the final administrative response. Similarly, the Associate Provost (Graduate Education), who is also the Dean of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, has been asked to assess the gap between current and optimal laboratory space for graduate students.

Undergraduate funding. Once again, the White Paper, *Strengths and Aspirations,* makes a commitment:

> *Action II.1.2: As student tuition and fees increase, McGill will systematically and proportionately increase the amount of financial aid available to students and facilitate the application procedures for obtaining it.*

As of 2006-07, an Entrance Bursary Program (EBP) had been established with the goal of making McGill more accessible to newly admitted undergraduate students from low- and moderate-income families. In 2006-07, the values of the EBP awards were based on the demonstrated need of the applicants and their families and on the level of tuition. Unfortunately, at current levels of funding from all sources, McGill was unable to satisfy fully unmet need.

The University is implementing a Canadian Student-Aid (CASA) module to our Student Information System, which should be in place for the academic year 2008-09. In addition to supporting the administrative processes associated with our award funds, CASA will allow us to put into practice an institutional need assessment to make optimal use of our resources. The ultimate goal is to provide students with individualised, comprehensive information regarding the cost of attendance and a package of assistance from the University, including all sources of support – scholarship, bursary, loan, Work Study, and so on.

Before the final administrative response is prepared, it will be necessary to explore the unmet need of our undergraduate population more fully to determine the gap between currently possible and ultimately desirable levels of funding, so we can then set targets. Determining unmet need is multifaceted, and student feedback will definitely be an important part of the process. Regardless of the difficulties, undergraduate financial aid has been identified as a high priority for University fund raising.

With reference to undergraduate student support, the Office of the Vice-Principal (Inter-Institutional Relations) will take a leadership role in advocating for:
- substantial and sustained reinvestment by the Quebec Government in Quebec universities;
- the unfreezing of tuition fees tied to a commitment by each university that increases its fees to dedicate 30% of the increase to need-based student bursaries;
- the renewal of the Canadian Millennium scholarship fund, which is scheduled to expire at the end of 2009;

- a Government program of matching donations to Quebec universities in order to encourage growth in philanthropy.

Undergraduate-student space. McGill is in the process of defining its first ever comprehensive Master Plan, and discussions relevant to its design principles support the notion that there must be an explicit commitment to support the construction of informal learning spaces for a diverse student body that will complement much-needed new academic facilities. There appears to be a serious inadequacy of space available for undergraduate students and an immediate need for space to accommodate group study, computer rooms, reading rooms, as well as informal social spaces to facilitate interdisciplinary interaction.

The White Paper, *Strengths and Aspirations,* supports the Library's role with respect to providing space for undergraduates:

> *Libraries are growing in importance as interactive space for students, both amongst themselves and with a wide range of digital and traditional media objects. This importance of physical space with continuous access has grown despite the "paperless" nature of many of the interactions. ... In addition, libraries are an ideal place to locate social space for students, staff, and faculty to interact informally.* (p. 45)

In support of this, the Library opens extended hours, up to 84 hours per week, with the provision of services and up to 24 hours every day as a study hall during examination periods.

The Associate Vice-Principal (University Services), a newly created and recently filled position with a dual report to the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) and to the Provost, has been asked to explore a single-point-of-contact alternative to ensure consistency in room-booking procedures and appropriate fees. Discussions will be undertaken with academic staff, support staff, and students to determine if the new streamlined booking system meets the needs of the McGill community and to help refine the booking system, as appropriate. In addition, discussions will be initiated with all stakeholders to establish whether the self-funding model for events is appropriate for the overall benefit of the McGill community.

In addition to improvements in physical space, work will be needed to broaden access to virtual space in the context of available resources. Working with the University community and student leaders, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) will facilitate the formulation of a policy to ensure the greatest possible access by all students to all public computers, including those connected to public LAN jacks and those located in teaching labs, public spaces or in the libraries on campus. A variety of IT projects are being considered to enhance the web/portal/e-mail environment to share information more effectively in the University community.

The final administrative response will set goals, priorities, and timelines for the various initiatives that will be needed to improve physical space and its use and to enhance virtual space.

Building a Learning Community

The Principal's Task Force made the following central recommendations in the area of building a learning community:

- *In creating a learning community, McGill should enhance the opportunities for the McGill experience to provide students with a window on the world.*

- *The achievement of this learning community requires ... a commitment ... to creating an inclusive and welcoming community, one that supports the development of strong collegial bonds and mutual respect and accountability among its members. ... It is one that celebrates diversity and is welcoming to its students.*

The White Paper, *Strengths and Aspirations,* also makes a clear statement upholding the principle of diversity:

> *We are committed to nurturing a learning environment in which students are offered an exceptional educational experience, enabling them to reach their full potential, in which research and enquiry flourish in a culture of innovation and excellence, and in which* diversity *and the exchange of ideas are cherished in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.* (p. 8, emphasis added)

> *Our quality and distinctiveness as a university, our civility, collegiality and community engagement, and our* diversity *and international character are valuable in their own right.* (p. 12, emphasis added)

In preparation for the final administrative response, the Office of the Provost will explore ways in which this statement of institutional commitment can be translated into specific initiatives. Much of the leadership will come from McGill's Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office [http://www.mcgill.ca/equity_diversity/]

> *[which] is committed to fostering a fair and inclusive environment that respects the dignity of each member of the McGill Community. By actively educating, heightening awareness, and providing opportunities for dialogue about equity and diversity-related issues, [they] strive to strengthen the Community in our shared responsibility toward a truly equitable society.*

> *The objectives are to:*
> - *Raise awareness and understanding by members of the University Community on matters of equity, diversity, discrimination and harassment;*
> - *Make connections between different members of the McGill Community, and the wider communities in Montréal, Québec, and across Canada in order to foster dialogue, networks and learning, and to develop and promote best practices;*
> - *Organise events and information campaigns through workshops, guest speakers, and print and electronic media;*
> - *Provide members of the McGill Community with help to understand the relevant policies and their implications.*
> - *Inform members of the McGill Community of available avenues and mechanisms to which they can direct their concerns.*

The Principal's Task Force recommended that Residences play a role in building a learning community. Conversations between the SEDE Office and Residences have already taken place to outline a year-long program, offered in conjunction with the Residence Life Office that aims to increase students' understanding of diversity in McGill Residences. Through this program, incoming students would continue to develop their awareness and appreciation of their peers and other members in the McGill community.

Recommended changes in academic programs and offerings will necessarily have to be explored by the teaching units and Faculties that would have responsibility for delivering them. At the institutional level, however, steps can be taken to promote exchange opportunities for McGill students at other Quebec universities. Negotiations are about to be finalised between McGill and Université de Montréal that will create a program to provide an opportunity for undergraduates in each university to attend the other university for one or two full semesters.

The final administrative response will set goals, priorities, and timelines for the various initiatives to further enhance a learning community at McGill in which the University serves as a window on the world and on Quebec and Montreal and in which diversity is celebrated.

Moving Forward

This preliminary administrative response is a progress report of a process that was initiated in the winter term of 2005. That process will continue for years to come, as we implement specific recommendations of the Principal's Task Force and strive to meet the aspirations articulated in its definition of a publicly-funded, research-intensive, student-centred university (Appendix F).

The consultation that was conducted for this administrative response has already achieved a number of the goals outlined above. The community has generated a fairly broad set of examples of successful initiatives that address particular recommendations, which will provide a basis for further discussions. Moreover, the exercise has sensitised University stakeholders to the recommendations and has engendered a sense of enthusiasm and cooperation, as reflected in the following comments from the Office of the CIO:

> *The IT units at McGill work closely with academic units, central service units and student partners. … We welcome this opportunity for a special focus on student life and learning over the course of the next years. We will ensure that the implementation of recommendations of the Principal's Task Force and the efforts of the new Deputy Provost, Student Life and Learning, are well-supported by reliable, responsive and creative IT solutions.*

The next steps will lead to the final administrative response that is due at the beginning of the fall term of 2007. A member of the University community will be designated to assume a leadership role for each of the recommendations, but all members of the community will be encouraged to address issues locally. The final administrative response will establish priorities and will include processes and timelines for implementation of the recommendations, the costs of implementation, and mechanisms for evaluating the University's progress in implementing them. Further consultation will be undertaken with Faculties, administrative units, senior

administrators, and students to continue the work started by the Principal and her Task Force in the winter of 2005, to serve the goal of promoting student-centeredness in its various forms.

Appendix A

Summarised Recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning and Examples of Current and Planned Initiatives to Response to Them

1. Strengthen Advising and Mentoring at McGill[2]

1.1 Adoption of an advising mission statement.

Current: The terms of reference of the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) provide clear guidance for the development and publication of an advising mission statement.
Planned: The *Statement of the Role of the Student in Advising* and the *Types of Advising and Advisors* (both CSA approved), along with a new advising mission statement, will be publicised to students in pre-registration materials as well as on the advising web site (to be developed).

1.2 Encourage all academic staff to contribute to the enhancement of student life and learning outside the classroom, and to the creation of a warm and welcoming learning community at McGill.

Current: Starting with the graduating class of 2009 (i.e., began Sept. 2005); all Medical students are assigned in groups of six to an Osler Fellow. This faculty member, along with a senior-year student volunteer, serves as a mentor, guiding the students in their transition from layman to professional.
Planned: The enhancement of engagement outside the classroom can also be facilitated by encouraging students to have membership in, or to be subscribers to, publications of the associated profession or aligned scholarly societies.

1.3 Ensure that every student has an Academic Adviser, which will entail that each department have access to one or more full- or part-time Academic Advisers.

Current: In some units, each student is assigned an Academic Advisor upon acceptance; that Advisor usually remains the student's Advisor as long as the student remains in the program to which he/she was accepted.
Planned: The CIO will launch an e-Advising project as a new initiative to support the efforts of the new advising network on campus.

1.4 Advisers should be integrated into the academic functions of the department or Faculty.

Current: Some units already fulfil this recommendation, because all faculty members advise students and participate in the departmental and Faculty activities.
Planned: The career advisor in Medicine (managerial staff) will attend the curriculum committee.

1.5 Adopt institutional standards to set out the number of students per full-time, dedicated Adviser.

Planned: Work is needed to develop and/or validate the norms and then to develop a system to monitor advisor's work loads.

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[2] Source of recommendations: *Final Report of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill*, December 2006 (http://www.mcgill.ca/files/principal/Final-Principal.pdf) and Workgroup reports. Where possible, both current and planned initiatives have been included.

1.6   Develop protocols and access to records of advice given to students by Academic Advisers.

Planned: The Advising Subcommittee recommended having "an audit trail of non-repudiation", which would also minimise the amount of repetition in the interview process.

1.7   Develop structured opportunities for professors and students to discover academic interests in common, and promote mentoring.

Current: The Faculty of Science launched an integrated plan for inquiry-based learning through their Office for Undergraduate Research. The initiatives in this program introduce students to research and promote interaction and sharing of academic interests [www.mcgill.ca/science/ours].
Planned: Some units will create 100-level course to "whet" students' appetites, because core 200-level courses are often too advanced for freshmen students.

1.8   Review effectiveness of standards and mechanisms of accountability for supervisors and graduate students.

Current: Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) offers two workshops: Policies and Guidelines for Graduate Supervision; Teaching Portfolio.
Planned: TLS is developing two projects intended to enhance the relationship between faculty members and graduate students who support teaching.

1.9   Allocate Resources to quality advising.

Planned: A full need assessment of Academic Advising will be undertaken. .

2.   Improved Resources for Students: Funding and Space

2.1   Funding packages for undergraduates should be offered at the time that students are deciding on offers of admission.

Current: As of 2006-07, an Entrance Bursary Program (EBP) has been established with the goal of making McGill more accessible to newly admitted undergraduate students from low and modest income families.
Planned: With improvements in administrative systems and with access to additional funds for student support (e.g., through philanthropy and increases in tuition), our goal is to provide students with individualised, comprehensive information regarding the cost of attendance and a package of assistance from the University including all sources of support – scholarship, bursary, loan, Work Study, etc.

2.2   Combinations of bursaries, fellowships, research and teaching assistantships would be considered to make up funding packages.

Current: The Faculty of Law has a research coordinator, whose facilitation has had a positive impact on the number of grant applications, thus improving the ability to fund students through grants. Graduate fellowships are a top priority in the upcoming capital campaign.
Planned: Increased funding from the University operating budget is planned for 2007-2008.

2.3   Encourage / support faculty members applying for all external funding that might enhance graduate student financial support.

  Current: See 2.2.

2.4   The University should increase resources available to fund graduate students over time.

  Current: Priorities have been established for 2007-2008; increased funding will be directed at international Ph.D. students in the form of McGill International Doctoral Awards (App. E).

2.5   Ensure that McGill offers to graduate students are competitive.

  Current: Student funding proposals have included a stipend that varies by discipline. The recently introduced differential fee waiver program in the Faculty of Science provides an example.
  Planned: The proposed University-wide program (App. E) supports the possibility of different funding levels in different disciplines.

2.6   Advise prospective graduate students in recruitment materials to apply for external support.

Current: The main web page for admissions to Graduate Studies is titled 'Graduate Admissions and Funding', with links to possible fellowships and other sources of funding.

2.7   Establish target enrolments consultatively.

Current: Enrolment management at the graduate-student level is directly related to faculty academic priorities for research.
Planned: Units have been surveyed to determine what targets they have established for 2007-2008. Further work will be required to establish methods to define clear enrolment targets. An administrative structure to support enrolment management (both undergraduate and graduate) is being planned.

2.8   Self-assessments collected by the University from students who apply for financial assistance should be aggregated and analysed to assist in determining the amount of the unmet financial need of our undergraduate and professional students.

Planned: The implementation of CASA (now underway) will enable standardised needs assessments to assist in calculating unmet need.

2.9   Improve need-based financial assistance while enhancing the number of merit based scholarships.

Planned: The Vice-Principal (Inter-Institutional Relations) will take a leadership role in advocating for a range of issues as outlined on p. 7 of the preliminary administrative response.

2.10   Streamline procedures and decision processes for the reservation of University space by student organisations wherever possible.

Current: A web-based event-booking system is being implemented to streamline the procedures and decision process for the reservation of University space.

Planned: A procedure involving a single point of contact will be explored as an alternative to ensure that there is consistency in room booking procedures and appropriate fees.

2.11 **The University should review the principles and underlying balance of fee structures and cost recoveries associated with the use of University facilities.**

Planned: In recognition of the need to strike an appropriate balance between McGill's financial imperatives and its role as a publicly-funded, research-intensive, student-centred university, options are being explored to reduce the cost of events to individual groups.

2.12 **In assessing the adequacy of work space for students, the University should take into account the special role the University Libraries can play in supporting individual and group working space, as well as informal social space.**

Current: The Library provides almost 1000 computers in e-zones across all branch libraries.
Planned: The Library has identified a number of priorities in this regard:
- Improve physical facilities;
- Build more group study rooms;
- Ensure targeted specialised facilities for graduate students;
- Improve the provision of social spaces;

2.13 **i) The University should take measures to ensure that access to virtual space is easier for all students.**

Planned:
- Develop innovative links to IPods and new E-book devices
- Install more computers, power outlets and improved wireless for laptops
- Improve website listings of computer resources available

ii) Encourage the development of a central policy framework that would ensure convenient access across campus regardless of Faculty.

Current: The Teaching and Learning Space Working Group (TLSWG) supported the implementation of ubiquitous wireless across the university.
Planned: TLS is working to develop guidelines for using wireless in the classroom.

iii) Looking into the possibility of providing additional convivial and multi-purpose space in locations across campus to accommodate computers for public use.

Planned: The CIO will facilitate the greatest possible access to all public computers.
Planned: TLS will make efforts to promote teaching and learning models in which students are engaged with each other in learning groups in face to face or virtual environments.

iv) With the support of the Office of CIO, developing and publishing a map on the University web site showing all points of computer access on McGill campuses.

Planned: A virtual map project will be developed, which will integrate two projects already underway (one to map public computers and peripherals and one to map wireless computers).

3. Building a Learning Community

3.1   Articulating, as appropriate, and in consultation with students and the Social Equity and Discrimination Officer, institutional expectations of students as members of a learning community that celebrates diversity.

Current: Community in Diversity is a campaign that aims to promote a greater appreciation for diversity at McGill and in Montreal and to stimulate dialogue among students through creative expression, interfaith dialogue, and Learning Circles on equity and diversity related issues
Planned: The SEDE Office will seek input from students through the development of a Student Advisory Committee.

3.2   Exploring possibilities for the development of academic orientations to the University tailored to students entering at different points in the program.

Current: The First Year Office works with students and Faculties and coordinates orientations for the following: newly registered students; graduate students and postdoctoral scholars; mature and re-entry students; students studying in English for the first time and international students.
Planned: The First Year Work Group is developing an orientation resource targeted to new students living off-campus in the nearby community and for students who will be leaving residences for apartment living.

3.3   Encouraging departments to examine course offerings, with a view to assessing the capacity to offer students access to more small or medium size classes at all stages of their program.

Current: Departments are being encouraged to examine course offerings, with a view to assessing the capacity to offer students' access to more small or medium size classes at all stages of their program.
Planned: A more thorough review of low-enrolment courses and programs is planned.

3.4   Consider the role that residences might play in bringing McGill students from different regions of Québec, Canada and the world together.

Planned: A year-long program will aim to increase students' understanding of diversity at McGill Residences through the implementation of a SEDE program in collaboration with the Residence Life Office.

3.5   In conjunction with the Chief Information Officer, developing and implementing policies and operations designed to enhance communication, both to students and within the University,

Planned: We hope to develop pre-arrival web modules that would introduce key individuals and provide key information about advising, all to be tailored to the student.

3.6   Articulate standards and goals for the administration of services for international students on campus.

Planned: The Office of the Deputy Provost is engaged in a review of international exchange agreements and will seek input from the community, through roundtable discussions, to address this recommendation.

3.7 **In consultation with the McGill's International Students' Network and the Office for International Students, exploring mechanisms to support student activities that bring together International and Canadian students.**

Current: International students are recognised through the provision of services like newspapers in non-English languages.
Planned: To be discussed and brainstormed at an Advisory Board Meeting.

3.8 **Exploring with departments the possibility and appropriateness of providing program options to students allowing them to enhance their second language skills at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.**

Current: There are a number of initiatives that address this recommendation: bilingual character of the undergraduate Law program; language requirements in some graduate programs; intensive pre-registration language instruction;
Planned: To better accommodate students wanting an improved FSL experience, a redesign of the Faculty Program in International Management, Western Europe – France Option is suggested, allowing FSL for 12 credits and an Area Focus Component adjusted for the non-fluent speaker. To better accommodate students wanting an improved ESL experience, a new Minor in English Canadian Studies could be considered with interdisciplinary content.

3.9 **Exploring with departments and the Dean of Continuing Education opportunities for making additional non-credit and three-credit courses available to provide options for the enhancement of second-language skills.**

Planned: The need for second-language instruction and the costs for meeting that need will have to be assessed.

3.10 **Exploring with sister universities in Montreal the possibility of joint programs that would enable McGill students to take advantage of opportunities to fulfil some program requirements at a French-language institution.**

Current: McGill is finalising an agreement with HEC for a joint EMBA program and an agreement with Université de Montréal for an exchange agreement.

3.11 **Exploring the University's ability to provide services to candidates and students in French as well as in English, and to communicate the availability of these services effectively to French-speaking candidates and students.**

Current: The ARR web pages and publications are bilingual except for the Calendars. The Minerva help line is available in English and in French. Mass e-mail is either bilingual or in the student's preferred language.
Planned: Assessment of the web pages and communications materials of other units serving students will be coordinated through the Deputy Provost's Office.

3.12 **Enhancement of second-language skills for staff.**

Current: HR offers programs designed for McGill administrative and support staff members to build language skills and confidence to use French in the workplace.

Planned: With the collaboration of the Centre of Continuing Education, Human Resources will organise customised French language courses to staff members. The program could be designed with a specific student advising context.

Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
…that [a number of] goals be included in the mandate of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)

Please see the description of the Deputy Provost's position in the *Preliminary Administrative Response to the Recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill* (p. 3 and Appendices C and D).

Recommendations form the Work Groups of the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning

Work Group A   Academic Advising and Mentoring
Work Group B   Administrative Supports and Financial Assistance
Work Group C   Diversity among Students and the Internationalisation of Education
Work Group D   The Quebec Experience
Work Group E   The E-experience

The recommendations from the Work Groups will be forwarded to specific units for action as appropriate. Wherever possible, responses related to the recommendations from the Work Groups have been incorporated into the consultations regarding the preliminary administrative response and will be considered in the final administrative response.

Appendix B

Consultation for the Preliminary Response[3]

Senior Administration	Vice-Principal (DAUR)
	Vice-Principal (Research and Institutional Relations)
	Vice-Principal (Inter-Institutional Relations)
	Deputy Provost (Student Live and Learning)
	Associate Provost (Planning and Budget)
	Associate Provost (Graduate Education)
	Associate Vice-Principal (Human Resources)
	Associate Vice-Principal (University Services)
Faculty Deans	Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
	Arts
	Dentistry
	Engineering
	Education
	Law
	Management
	Medicine
	Music
	Religious Studies
	Science
Non-Faculty Deans	Dean of Continuing Education
	Dean of Students
Directors	Admissions, Recruitment and Registrar
	Ancillary Services
	Chief Information Officer
	Libraries
	Planning and Institutional Analysis
	Residences
	Scholarships and Student Aid Office
	Social Equity and Diversity Education
	Student Mental Health
	Teaching and Learning Services
Student Groups	Student Society of McGill University
	Post-Graduate Student Society
	Macdonald Campus Student Society
	McGill Association of Continuing Education Students

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[3] Input for the preliminary administrative response was solicited from the following areas, and responses were received from most of them. These and other areas, including students, will be consulted more fully for preparation of the final administrative response.

Appendix C

Position Profile for the Dean of Students

McGill University is seeking outstanding candidates for the position of Dean of Students, to provide dynamic leadership through strong administrative, strategic, interpersonal and communication skills. The Dean, who reports to the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), has primary responsibility for championing student rights, fostering academic integrity, and providing impartial oversight of the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. The Dean will also play an important role in promoting University-wide initiatives to improve academic advising. An effective collaborator and clear communicator, not only with students, but also with a variety of internal and external constituencies, the Dean of Students maintains a close working relationship with students, student organisations and leaders, faculty, and administrators, advocating student concerns in both academic and non-academic matters.

Candidates should have experience in working effectively to handle difficult situations and to solve problems involving individual, and groups of, students. The Dean must have a demonstrated ability to assess and address University-wide issues. A tactful, trusted academic, the Dean of Students will foster respect and contribute to a sense of community spanning both campuses of McGill University.

The Dean of Students is a participant in internal University governance, serving on Senate and as a Chair or member of a number of Senate Committees: the Committee on the Coordination of Student Services, the Committee on Student Affairs, the University Admissions Committee, and the Committee on Student Discipline, among others. Along with the Vice-Principal (Inter-Institutional Relations), the Dean acts as liaison for neighbourhood relations with residents and boroughs, and initiates inter-institutional discussions. The Dean of Students responds to family and media concerns and issues. He or she will be an innovator and manager for student rights and responsibilities, and act as a focal point for student society liaison and consultation. Having oversight of student well-being, the Dean will contribute to senior administrative decisions regarding student life and be responsible for the reorganisation of Student Services, in close cooperation with the Executive Director of Services for Students .

While no one individual is likely to meet all of the criteria in equal measure, the following background, experience, and personal qualities will be sought in candidates:

- a proven record of accomplishment as a teacher, scholar and academic administrator;
- a demonstrated ability to assess and address University-wide issues in areas of responsibility;
- a strong understanding of the functions, importance and contributions of services to students from an academic perspective;
- a leader and motivator, with the ability to work in a collaborative and collegial manner, foster respect, and contribute to a sense of community;
- an open-minded decision maker, mediator, and negotiator;
- the ability, or willingness to develop the skills, to work in both English and French.

Appendix D

Position Profile for the Executive Director of Services for Students

http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/opportunities/senior/

The mission of McGill University includes the advancement of learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society by offering to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the best education available. McGill University is dedicated to the education of over 32,000 of the best students from Canada, the US and abroad. The Principal's Taskforce on Student Life and Learning (http://www.mcgill.ca/studentlife/taskforce/) has, in the last year, sought views broadly in the McGill community on the most effective ways to resource and structure University administrative support and services so as to deliver services that further enhance student life and learning. In the coming year the recommendations made by the taskforce will be implemented, making this an exciting time to join McGill.

McGill invites applications for an Executive Director of Services for Students; the mission of this area is to promote and support student success. Reporting directly to the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), the incumbent will foster and enhance the student experience through the management and development of student services. Coordinating with the Deputy Provost's team and other significant leaders in the McGill community, the incumbent will be responsible for bringing strategic planning to medium and long term visions of the services and to coordinate an effective and efficient administrative support system. The Executive Director will understand and articulate the present and emerging needs and directions of services and work closely with the Dean of Students regarding the reorganisation of current student services, ongoing issues of student well-being, crisis planning and response, and the relationship between services for students and academic issues.

Applicants for this position will demonstrate a belief in service heads as experts in their fields and a commitment to a student-centred university as defined at McGill (http://www.mcgill.ca/studentlife/progressreport/student-centred/), should possess a graduate degree, have extensive experience in a strongly-related professional domain and have knowledge of universities. Other critical characteristics include superior communication skills at individual and broader levels and especially with students and the ability to communicate in both English and French. The ideal candidate will have a project management approach to operations within a long-term vision; managerial accounting skills; absolute diplomacy, maturity, sensitivity and discretion; a consultative approach; proven ability to relate to senior administration and to contribute to the advancement of services.

Appendix E

Announcement of McGill International Doctoral Awards (MIDAs)[4]

MCGILL INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL AWARDS (MIDAs)
(originally proposed as "McGill International Tuition Student Awards" [MITSAs])

As of September 2007, all international Doctoral students registered full-time at McGill will pay the same tuition fees as Quebec Doctoral students. With the new **McGill International Doctoral Awards (MIDAs)** (originally proposed as MITSAs), McGill eliminates a major obstacle in the recruitment and retention of high-quality international Doctoral students.

The Office of the Associate Provost (Graduate Education) is delighted to announce a new award that will eliminate the tuition supplement for all international Doctoral students

(PhD/DMus/DCL), effective September 2007. The McGill International Doctoral Award will work along with the existing provincial McGill differential fee waivers and MELS bilateral and special international supplement waivers to exempt all international PhD/DMus/DCL students registered full-time in years 1 to 4 (i.e. PhD1 to PhD4) from the international tuition supplement. (As of PhD5, students are in additional session and not assessed the international supplement.) The end result is that international Doctoral students at McGill will pay the same tuition fees as Quebec students. Eliminating the international tuition supplement significantly enhances McGill's graduate programs in attracting, funding, and enrolling highly-qualified international students. It is hoped that these awards will aid in attracting international students for the September admissions cycle.

International students whose international tuition supplement is paid by an external source (e.g. fellowships that include direct payment of tuition and third party billing contracts) will not be eligible for these awards. Fall and Winter DFWs will work in tandem with this program; summer DFWs will be used for eligible Master's students.

The cost of the MIDAs will be shared between the Faculties and the Office of the Associate Provost (Graduate Education). This award program includes a major injection of new permanent funds from the central administration and is based on a **cost-sharing arrangement in which 2/3 of the funds come from the Associate Provost's office and 1/3 from the Faculty in which the student is registered** – a change in the proposed 50/50 split in the MIDAs that will allow greater Faculty, Department, and Supervisor participation and flexibility.

A desired supplementary outcome of this program is that the funds previously used to support international graduate student tuition will be available for increased graduate recruitment and funding at both the Master's and PhD level.

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[4] Announcement by Dr. Martin Kreiswirth, Associate Provost (Graduate Education) and Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, March 6, 2007.

Appendix F

The Student-Centred, Research-Intensive University

http://www.mcgill.ca/files/principal/Student-Centred-Research-Intensive.pdf

The Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill encourages the University to ensure that decision-making at all levels is informed by principles and goals appropriate to a student-centred, research-intensive University. The following is a statement of McGill's aspirations in this regard:

> *McGill is an outstanding research-intensive University that strives to offer its students the best education possible, in a vibrant environment for learning and campus life that supports students' academic progress and personal development. All members of the McGill community are committed to ensuring that students' concerns and interests pervade all aspects of University life.*

> *Students are valued members of a cooperative academic community, and a primary concern of the University. They are treated as individuals, whose diverse backgrounds, goals, aspirations, needs, talents, and successes are welcomed and celebrated. Students are given the means and opportunities to freely probe, examine, debate issues and ideas, and actively pursue their educational goals. As members of a research-intensive university, students learn about, and are encouraged to participate in, research and scholarship in their field.*

> *From the first contact of prospective students with the University, interactions among students, faculty, and administrative and support staff are based on mutual trust and respect. McGill strives to make the information needed by students easily accessible to them. The rights and responsibilities of students are clearly articulated and supported.*

> *University decisions are made with due consideration given to their impact on students. Students participate in University governance and influence goals set by academic units, faculties, and the administration. Moreover, students are encouraged to participate in ongoing dialogue, where their voices are heard and where their concerns are addressed.*

> *The University provides students with a wide variety of academic and support services, striving to make them easy to access, and it fosters students' interest in organising their own activities. Students' best interests are a principal focus of academic, administrative, and support staff. The University helps students obtain the financial support they need to pursue their education, by providing internal programs that are as generous as possible, and by supporting students in their efforts to find employment and external support.*

> *The University helps students develop the means to succeed, to inquire after truth, and to contribute to society over their lifetimes.*